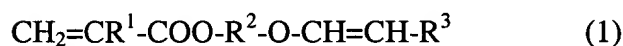


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition which comprises a radical polymerization inhibitor and a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):

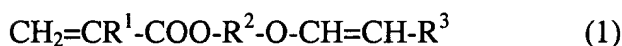


in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

wherein the total amount of the radical polymerization inhibitor and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester is not less than 95% by weight relative to the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition, and

said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition comprises the radical polymerization inhibitor and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester as an end product.

2. (currently amended): A vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition as in claim 1, which comprises a radical polymerization inhibitor, a basic compound and a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

wherein the total amount of the radical polymerization inhibitor, the basic compound and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester is not less than 95% by weight relative to the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition, and

said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition comprises the radical polymerization inhibitor, the basic compound and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester as an end product.

3. (currently amended): A method of producing the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition according to Claim 1, which comprises causing a radical polymerization inhibitor, to coexist with a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



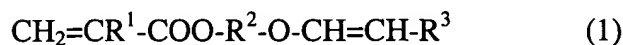
in the formula, R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R² represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R³ represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

wherein the total amount of the radical polymerization inhibitor and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester is not less than 95% by weight relative to the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition, and

said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition comprises the radical polymerization inhibitor and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester as an end product.

4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended): A method handling- of transporting, storing or transferring a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester, which comprises handling-transporting, storing or transferring said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester under the condition such that a molecular oxygen concentration in the gaseous phase in contact with a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester is 0.01 to 15% by volume and said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester being represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R² represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R³ represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted.

6. (currently amended): A method of ~~handling-transporting, storing or transferring~~ a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester, which comprises ~~handling-transporting, storing or transferring~~ said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in a lightproof structure and said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester being represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R² represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R³ represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted.

7. (currently amended): A method of ~~handling-transporting, storing or transferring~~ a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester which comprises ~~handling-transporting, storing~~

or transferring said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in a lightproof structure while keeping a molecular oxygen concentration in the gaseous phase within said lightproof structure at 0.01 to 22% by volume and said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester being represented by the following formula (1):



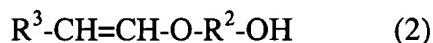
in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted.

8. (currently amended): A method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11

carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and which comprises reacting a hydroxyl group-containing vinyl ether represented by the following formula (2):

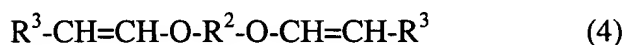


in the formula, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

with a (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (3):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group and R^4 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 8 atoms and said hydroxyl group-containing vinyl ether containing at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a divinyl ether represented by the following formula (4):



in the formula, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and the two R^3 groups are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom, a straight,

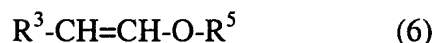
branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

a 2-substituted-1, 3-dioxo compound represented by the following formula (5):



in the formula, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms, and may optionally be substituted, and

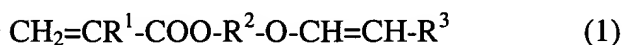
an unsaturated bond-containing vinyl ether represented by the following formula (6):



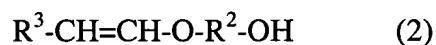
in the formula, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted; R^5 represents an organic residue containing an unsaturated bond represented by $-\text{CR}^6=\text{CR}^7$; and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or an organic residue.

9. (canceled).

10. (previously presented): A method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, which comprises reacting a hydroxyl group-containing vinyl ether represented by the following formula (2):



in the formula, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms, and may optionally be substituted,

with a (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (3):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group and R^4 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 8 carbon atoms,

in an atmosphere such that a molecular oxygen concentration is 0.01 to 10% by volume.

11. (previously presented): A method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

which comprises carrying out said method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in a lightproof structure.

12. (previously presented): A method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester as in claim 11 represented by the following formula (1):

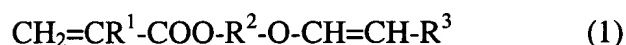


in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon

atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

which comprises carrying out said method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in a lightproof structure in an atmosphere such that a molecular oxygen concentration in the gaseous phase within said lightproof structure is 0.01 to 15% by volume.

13. (previously presented): A method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

which comprises carrying out said method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in an atmosphere such that a molecular oxygen concentration in the gaseous phase in the purification system is 0.01 to 10% by volume.

14. (previously presented): A method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

which comprises carrying out said method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in a lightproof structure in an atmosphere such that a molecular oxygen concentration in the gaseous phase in the purification system is 0.01 to 15% by volume.

15. (original): The method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester according to Claim 13, wherein said purification of a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic esters is carried out in the manner of distillation purification.

16. (currently amended): A method of producing the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition according to Claim 2, which comprises causing both of a radical polymerization inhibitor and a basic compound to coexist with a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula, R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^2 represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon

atoms and may optionally be substituted, and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

wherein the total amount of the radical polymerization inhibitor, the basic compound and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester is not less than 95% by weight relative to the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition, and

said vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition comprises the radical polymerization inhibitor, the basic compound and the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester as an end product.

17. (original): The method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester according to Claim 14, wherein said purification of a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic esters is carried out in the manner of distillation purification.

18. (previously presented): The vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition according to Claim 1, wherein said radical polymerization inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of quinone polymerization inhibitors, amine polymerization inhibitors, copper dithiocarbamate polymerization inhibitors and N-oxyl polymerization inhibitors.

19. (previously presented): The vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition according to Claim 2, wherein said basic compound is selected from the group consisting of alkali metal hydroxides, alkaline earth metal hydroxides and amines.

20. (previously presented): The vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition according to Claim 1, wherein a level of addition of the radical polymerization

inhibitor is not less than 0.00001% by weight but not more than 5% by weight relative to the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester.

21. (previously presented): The vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester composition according to Claim 2, wherein a level of addition of the basic compound is not less than 0.00001% by weight but not more than 5% by weight relative to the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester.